

Resolution to Amend Diocesan Canons

Canon 18 Ecclesiastical Discipline

Proposer: Bradley S. Wirth, Rector, All Saints' Episcopal Church, Whitefish - Columbia Falls, Jean Collins, Rector, St. James Church, Lewistown, and Steve Oreskovich, Retired

*Resolved that Canon 18 Ecclesiastical Discipline of the Canons of the Diocese of Montana be amended by adding **Section 14 Imputation**.*

Canon 18: Section 14 Imputation

Any Member of the Clergy canonically resident in the Diocese who deems himself or herself to be under imputation, by rumor or otherwise, of any Offense for which proceedings could be had under Title IV of the Canons of the General Convention, may on his or her own behalf request the Bishop Diocesan, or a Bishop serving under the provision of Title III, Canon 13, to conduct an inquiry with regard to such imputation. Upon receipt of such request by a Member of the Clergy, it shall be the duty of the Bishop Diocesan to cause the matter to be investigated and to report the result to the Member of the Clergy. If there is not a Bishop Diocesan, or a Bishop with Ecclesiastical Authority, then the Standing Committee serving as the Ecclesiastical Authority shall cause the matter to be investigated and to report the result to the Member of the Clergy.

Explanation:

The Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons have included in their 2018 report to General Convention that the canon, known as the "Ugly Rumor" Canon (Title IV, Canon 19, 31) be stricken from the Canons of the General Convention. They prefer that in the event a bishop did not want to intervene as a pastoral matter that the inquiry turn into a Title IV matter with a complainant and a respondent. Some clergy, however, hope that the canonical change fails as this is a means by which the clergy can immediately challenge what they believe to be a rumor that is damaging their reputation. Of course, in the flow of the investigation, the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority finds there is substance behind the rumor, the whole matter can be forwarded to the intake officer and be treated as a potential Title IV matter.

In the event this canon is not stricken by the General Convention meeting in July of 2018, the resolution will be withdrawn by the proposer as the matter will be moot. For purpose of clarity, the following, in italics, is the actual canon as it appears in the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church. The bold print is material added by the proposer to the General Canon.

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